

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: August 23, 2007

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 5:58 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Attending Members

Vernon Brown, Chairman
Bob Cockrum
Susie Day
Ron Gibson
Monroe Gray, Jr.
Dane Mahern
William Oliver

Absent Members

Bob Lutz

BUDGET HEARING

Controller Overview
Department of Parks and Recreation

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council met on Thursday, August 23, 2007. Chairman Vernon Brown called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the following members present: Bob Cockrum, Susie Day, Ron Gibson, Monroe Gray, Jr., Dane Mahern, and William Oliver. Absent was Bob Lutz.

BUDGET HEARING

Joseph Wynns, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), stated that DPR has had a great year. He stated that the Mayor has asked all departments to commit to a reduction for this budget year. Mr. Wynns reviewed a handout in detail of the 2007 Budget Reductions for DPR, which is attached as Exhibit A. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR has committed to a \$1 million dollar reduction in 2007 toward the Mayor's goal. Some of the reductions are as follows:

- Releasing seasonal employees early
- Not filling 16 vacant positions until 2008 or until city-wide hiring freeze is removed.
- Workers Compensation balance to be reserved
- Recreation supplies: employee clothing, office supplies
- Reducing Property Casualty Insurance by \$54,000
- Delaying consulting service for Pennsy Trail Project
- Reduction of Mowing cycles
- Vehicle replacement delayed

Councillor Gray asked what reaction DPR got when the IndyParks pools were closed early. Mr. Wynns stated that there were a lot of calls until school started back; then the complaints dwindled down. He said that the spray grounds and the indoor pools are still open.

Councillor Oliver asked how the contracts are written with regards to mowing. Mr. Wynns stated that the standard is to keep the grass at a certain height. He said that there is an understanding with the contractor that if there is no grass to be cut, then there is no cutting. He also said that DPR can reduce the cycles per mowing season, and the weather really determines how much those cycles are being used. Councillor Oliver asked if the contract is for the height and cycle of mowing that grass. Mr. Wynns answered in the affirmative.

Councillor Mahern asked if there has been any savings with the mowing due to the lack of rain. Mr. Wynns answered that there has been some savings.

Chair Brown thanked Mr. Wynns and his staff for their efforts at being responsible for taxpayer's dollars. He asked if this reduction drastically reduces programs. Mr. Wynns answered in the negative, stating that in talking with the Mayor about budget reductions, there was not to be any cuts in programs.

Councillor Cockrum asked if the vacant positions will carry over into next year. Mr. Wynns stated that those vacancies are budgeted in the 2008 budget.

Mr. Wynns continued with the budget presentation and reviewed a Powerpoint presentation in detail, which is attached as Exhibit B. He stated that DPR's mission is to provide or facilitate quality recreation and leisure opportunities; encourage and support natural and cultural resource stewardship and environmental education; include safe, clean and well maintained park facilities for the community's enjoyment; and promote mutually beneficial county-wide partnerships.

Councillor Oliver asked what the status of the First Tee Program is and if that is part of the budget cuts. Mr. Wynns stated that golf is 100% self-sustaining, and it is not a part of any cuts. He also stated that the project is moving forward, and DPR should be bidding the first phase in a couple of months. Don Colvin, Administrator, Resource Development, DPR, stated that DPR is putting together the site package for the bids and should be done at the end of September or the beginning of October, 2007. He said that the first phase is site clearing, setting up the greens and tee barks, fairways, driving range and the parking area. He said that in 2008, DPR will bid the second phase of the project, which includes the grass seeds and the turf being laid, the irrigation system, netting and then the building. Mr. Colvin stated that hopefully First Tee will be open in late 2008 or early 2009.

Chair Brown asked how this program is funded. Mr. Wynns stated that First Tee is funded through golf fees from the golf professionals and a grant.

Mr. Wynns talked about slide number four, Value of Parks and Recreation, stating that the Trust for Public Land did a survey to show the value of what each citizen is getting when they visit IndyParks. He said that compared to Ohio and Kentucky, Indianapolis residents spend \$45 dollars per year for the parks. He said that sometimes taxpayers need to hear the bargain that they are getting for the park system. Mr. Wynns stated that for that \$45 dollars per year, citizens get some of the following facilities and services:

- 192 Park Properties
- 11,018 Acres
- 23 Aquatic Facilities
- 23 Family Centers
- 3 Dog Parks
- 174 Picnic Areas
- 13 Golf Courses
- 3 Restaurants Leased

Councillor Oliver asked if there are any charges to non-county residents. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR tried to charge non-residents, but the cost to proceed was not worth collecting the money. He said that, for example, DPR was charging \$5,000 to collect \$1,000. He said that it had become a nightmare to try and have an out-of-county fee. He said that the cost to put a system in to track out-of-county fees is very costly, especially if there is no system to monitor it. Councillor Oliver asked if there is a charge for Major Taylor Velodrome. Mr. Wynns answered in the affirmative. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR will look into some information on a tracking system to charge out-of-county residents.

Councillor Mahern asked how long ago DPR tried to charge those out-of-county residents. Mr. Wynns stated that it was about five or ten years ago.

Mr. Wynns referred to the following highlights and initiatives:

Department Highlights

- Named a finalist, National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Parks & Recreation Management
- Provided service to 8 million park visitors through programs, parks, and greenways
- Completed 1.6 miles on Fall Creek Greenway Trail from Skiles Test Park to 56th Street
- Provided 140,000 free, nutritious lunches to children at 96 park locations through the summer Food Service for Children program
- Opened Paul Ruster Bark Park

2008 Strategic Initiatives

- Complete Phase Two of the First Tee golf facility
- Continue nationwide community health and livability campaign "Step Into Action" to address issues with obesity and sedentary behaviors in youth and adults
- Break ground on the new Windsor Village Park project
- Initiate "World Needs Play" campaign by providing opportunities for active play in children
- Continue to provide crime prevention programs and resources in targeted neighborhoods

Mr. Wynns stated that he will run through some of the budget numbers and that Wayne Simpson, Chief Financial Officer, will provide in-depth numbers as the hearing progresses. Mr. Wynns talked about how the funds are divided in 2008. He stated that the majority of DPR's budget is spent between programs and maintenance. The breakdown of the numbers is:

- Programs- \$11,552,290
- Maintenance- \$9,766,928
- Administration- \$4,959,838: \$2.4 million goes toward Information Technology and Utilities
- Capital Improvement Program (CIP)- \$3,519,000
- Safety (Park Rangers)- \$1,470,788
- Golf (Non-tax based)- \$1,393,983
- Greenways & Resource Development- \$1,005,011

Mr. Wynns stated that this information gives the committee an idea on how the money is divided up in DPR.

Mr. Wynns talked about slide number nine, 2008 Parks and Recreation budget Summary to show the overall increases in the budget. He said that the base amount started off with \$33,470,934 with the following increases and decreases: American Federation of

State, County and Municipal employees (AFSCME) raises of \$99,850, City-County building rent increase of \$3,075, Corporation Counsel increase of \$37,104 and the reduction in vehicle leases down \$9,000. Mr. Wynns stated that the Office of Finance and Management (OFM) guidelines brought the budget down \$131,029, with a Utilities increase of \$65,875, for a total budget of \$33,667,838.

Mr. Wynns stated that with DPR's budgeted taxes, they have been right in line with a lot of other departments, trying to take some of the burden off of the tax rate.

Robert Clifford, Director, OFM, stated that the Parks Department puts forth the effort to run a first-class department. He said that when OFM asked Mr. Wynns to help with budgetary issues, Mr. Wynns and Mr. Simpson got busy trying to find ways to help. He said that Mr. Wynns and DPR step up to be cost effective and always find ways to save money while still providing the services.

Mr. Simpson stated that the increase that is shown between the 2008 Proposed and the 2007 Original budget is \$196,904. He said that in Character 01, Personal Services, there were AFSCME increases per contract for \$98,850 and some budgetary moves between Characters which resulted in a zero net effect. He said that because of the 21st Century Grant and some new guidelines, there have been some adjustments within Characters 01, 02, and 03, and they moved \$9,871 into Character 01 for an increase of \$109,721 dollars.

Councillor Cockrum stated that in the handout provided last year, the records show that the original budget for 2007 in Character 01 was \$16,283, 901. The \$308,000 difference was due to the raises that were amended to the budget and were not on the original printouts.

Mr. Simpson stated that in Character 02, Supplies, there was a \$1,020 decrease because of the 21st Century Grant moving to Character 01. He said that there was also \$11,000 taken out of Character 02 and moved to the Promotional account in Character 03 per OFM guidelines. Mr. Simpson stated that the decrease for Character 02 is \$12,020 dollars.

Councillor Cockrum asked what the difference between proposed budget and requested budget is. Mr. Clifford stated that the 2008 requested budget is the request from the departments and the 2008 proposed budget is what was prepared by OFM and introduced as the proposed budget by the Mayor. Councillor Cockrum said that the committee is looking at the proposed budget. Mr. Clifford answered in the affirmative stating that they put both columns in so that the Council can see what the agencies are asking and what OFM is recommending as part of their budget. Councillor Cockrum asked if the bottom line is that the budget request is \$34,934, and the proposed is \$33,667 dollars. Mr. Clifford answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Simpson stated that in Character 03, Other Services & Charges, \$8,851 dollars was taken out and moved to Character 01 for the 21st Century Grant realignment. He said that \$11,000 was moved from Character 02 to Character 03 for the Promotional account per OFM guidelines. Mr. Simpson stated that the rent increase was \$3,075, and the utilities increased to \$65,875, for a total Character 03 increase of \$71,099 dollars.

Mr. Simpson stated that in Character 04, Properties & Equipment, there is a reduction in Vehicle Lease Purchase allocation of \$9,000 dollars. He stated that in Character 05, Internal Charges, the increase is \$37,104 dollars. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR is experiencing a lot of lawsuits regarding playground equipment, and the attorneys are spending a lot of time defending those lawsuits.

Councillor Cockrum asked in reference to Character 03, line item 381, Support of the Arts, why there were there no reductions in that line item. Mr. Clifford stated that the grant funding had already gone out days before, and OFM cannot ask for it back.

Councillor Gibson stated that funding for the arts is much broader than just the activities. It deals with economic development, giving resources to help promote the City. He said that the arts is one of those areas where there needs to be a level of funding and he strongly encourages support.

Mr. Simpson stated that the proposed 2008 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) is flat with the budget.

Mr. Wynns thanked the committee for having them at the meeting to present their budget. He said that DPR is very appreciative of every dollar and works hard to do the best they can with what is received.

Councillor Cockrum asked if the projected property tax rate is the same as this year, subject to assessed value determination. Mr. Clifford stated that as a part of the budget, what is projected as the tax rate in the Assessed Value (AV) were the assessed evaluations that were given to the Department of Local Government and Finance (DLGF) and were rejected because of the trending and assessments of commercial properties. He said that those tax rates were kept, assuming that trending and re-assessments of those commercial properties will only cause the AV values to go up. The rates should go down and as part of the budget, so OFM left those in place. He said that with the adoption of the Local Option Income Tax (LOIT), property taxes can only go down; they cannot be increased. He said that any increase has to come through that LOIT, so property tax levees are frozen. Mr. Clifford stated that a LOIT was supposed to replace that levy growth, and some of those funds are factored in the Parks budget for 2008. He said that there was \$11.8 million dollars of LOIT collected which is broken down in two parts. Those two parts are: .2 % for LOIT and .45% for public safety tax. Mr. Clifford stated that the .2% had to be raised first before the .45%. He said that when the Council raised the .2% that raised \$11 million dollars, which was offset by property tax reductions proposed in this budget. They proposed about \$13 million in reductions and property tax levees for 2008.

Councillor Cockrum asked if there is a fund for golf that accumulates fees through capital improvements done on the golf courses. If so, where can that balance be seen. Mr. Brown stated that the projected amount for 2008 is \$2.6 million. He said that is the amount after all of the 2008 expenditures are factored in. Councillor Gray stated that golf money is for golf projects and that money is paid by the golfers who pay the green fees.

Chair Brown asked Mr. Simpson to state what DPR's budget was for 2007 and is for 2008 and the difference between the two. Mr. Simpson stated that the original budget for

2007 was \$33,470,934, and the proposed budget for 2008 is \$33,667,838, for a difference of \$196,904 and a percentage increase of .6%.

Councillor Cockrum stated that there has not been a huge increase in the Parks department budget since 2004.

Public Testimony

John Jackson, Associate Principal for Horatio Architect, Chair of the Advocacy Committee for Indianapolis Parks Foundation (IPF), stated that IPF's primary mission is to raise funds and the foundation serves as an advocate for parks in Indianapolis. The IPF pursues funding opportunities through grants, sponsorships, and fundraising events that are used to help purchase land, develop new parks, maintain existing parks and provide numerous support to IndyParks programs.

{Clerk's Note: This handout is attached as Exhibit C}

Mr. Jackson stated that in 2006, IPF received grants and other contributions totaling \$636,300 dollars, and they were designated as follows:

- Youth & Family Programs- 19%
- Land Acquisition & Land Stewardship- 11%
- Capital Improvements (Windsor Village)- 70%

Mr. Jackson stated that 100% of the dollars raised goes directly to IndyParks, because the foundation raises its own operating funds. IndyParks is not charged an administration or fundraising fee, so that those dollars contributed to the foundation can be used to provide property tax relief.

Mr. Jackson stated that the IPF Board also brings invaluable knowledge and resources and currently has members with expertise in environmental law, architecture, construction, engineering, planned giving and charitable gifts law, commercial development, and real estate. He said that through the partnership between IndyParks and the Parks Foundation, the City is realizing a great deal of efficiency.

Councillor Cockrum stated that the Parks Foundation gets more effective every year, and they do an outstanding job in supporting DPR.

Chair Brown asked what the time line is for Windsor Village to break ground. Mr. Colvin stated that DPR is looking at late September or early October to have that up and running. Mr. Wynns stated that the Parks Foundation has raised \$1.3 million dollars of hard money to put into this project.

Mr. Wynns asked the committee to save the dates of September 25 – 29, 2007 for the National Convention. He said that there will be 10,000 delegates, and exhibitors will be attending from all over the country.

Chair Brown thanked Mr. Wynns and DPR for the information they presented and thanked them for the awesome work they do within their department.

Councillor Oliver acknowledged the people at Oscar Charleston Park for the contribution they made to the upgrade of the park and the shelter. Mr. Wynns stated that the National Federation of High School Sports is housed right next to the National Collegiate Athletic Association of Athletes (NCAA). He said that the Federation has built a huge shelter and had about 300 kids out cleaning up the park. He said that all materials were donated by T-Mobile.

With no further business pending, and upon motion duly made, the Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

VB/law

Vernon Brown, Chair
Parks and Recreation Committee